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An Imaginary Conversation

(The Story of a Conversion)

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An Imaginary Conversation

(The Story of a Conversion)

I am going to do this morning what I have never done before, and what I have never heard any one else do—deliver a discourse in the form of conversation. I have called my address "An Imaginary Conversation, or The Story of a Conversion." The plan has been suggested by my recent re-reading of the works of Plato in preparation for addresses on Socrates and Plato. You will remember that all of Plato's writings are in the form of dialogue, the principal role of which is taken by Socrates. It struck me as a rather interesting as well as effective way of presenting an argument, and a method that might be used in public speech as well as in literature. So I have decided to try it, and if effective we may try it again some day. My first intention was to make this a dialogue between a clergyman and a skeptic on the foundations of the Christian religion; but I have decided instead, in this first conversation, to make it more general, perhaps more rambling, as that is usually the form of spontaneous conversation, and let the speakers be two laymen. I might add that neither of these men represent in detail my convictions on the problems discoursed. I shall try to keep them true to type.

The first of these men is a typical business man, who has gone thru life without giving religion any really serious thought. His time has been almost exclusively occupied by his business and social affairs; and his reading almost entirely confined to the daily newspaper, magazine articles, light fiction and a little poetry. He has always been a regular attendant at an orthodox Christian church, accompanying his wife and children every Sunday morning to the family pew. He has taken his religion largely as a matter of course. It has never occurred to him that anything his minister said might be doubted. The church, he was assured, was the real instrument of salvation; and while he himself never took his religion very seriously, he was convinced that religion was a great influence for good in the world and therefore should be supported. During the latter years, he began to feel that he should have some interest outside of his business; so he took up the study of botany, and from year to year he became more absorbed in the wonders which this science revealed. He was a man of exemplary life, a good citizen, and a pleasant neighbor.

Living nearby was another man, also a business man, a man of similar nature and character, except that this man

from early manhood had been accustomed to reading a very different type of literature, and had a mind that insisted upon delving into the deeper problems of existence. He had never been satisfied with the explanation of things given by the Christian church, and had taken up the study of philosophy and science especially as applied to the problems of religion, with the result that he naturally grew away from the church, developed into a skeptic and later into a rationalist, who believed most thoroly in the supremacy of reason and the authority of evidence.

The first man was content to accept authority—the authority of the church—for truth, while the second recognized the truth only as authority. These men were very good friends, and saw quite a bit of each other, though they had never discussed the problems of religion. It is only in the last few days that this question of religion found its way into their conversation, and now it has become the principal topic of discussion. Naturally the rationalist does most of the talking, partly because he is much better prepared to discuss these problems, and partly because he set out with the deliberate intention of converting the other man to his way of thinking. The conversations which I shall repeat to you did not take place at one sitting; in fact they were spread over a number of days. The rationalist made it his business each time they met to give the other man something to think about and then let him have a few days to do the thinking. In case I should have occasion to refer to these men by name, let us call them Mr. Jones and Mr. Smith—Mr. Jones being the one who represents the orthodox type of thought, and Mr. Smith the rationalist.

I.

These conversations were first opened up by Jones' reference to his studies in botany. He had been telling Smith of the wonderful beauties of the plant world, and how he marvelled at the admirable and varied structures that characterize the different flowers, giving credit to "the creator of all things" for designing these contrivances which so excite our wonder. To which Smith replied: "I agree with you as to the beauty and interest that stand revealed as soon as we direct our attention to the mechanism of the living world, but I hold other views as to their origin and purpose." "Is that so?" said Jones. "Why, you surprise me! I have never thought of any other view in regard to their origin and purpose; but your remark certainly arouses my curiosity." "Well," said Smith, "I have never discussed this question of origin with you because I know how little you have thought about such things; and, how content you, like thousands of your

fellowmen, have been to rest satisfied with the more commonly accepted views as to the origin of our little planet and its tenants!"

"Perhaps I have been indifferent in this respect," said Jones, "but even tho I had given thought to it, do you feel sure that I would have reached a different conclusion from that which I now hold?"

Smith: "Yes, I am positive that if you gave the question as earnest attention as you have always devoted to matters of business, you could not accept that narrative of this apparently infinite universe having been called into existence some six thousand years ago at the will of a being you call God."

Jones: "And what makes you think that?"

Smith: "Well, to begin with, the chronology is all wrong. Setting aside the view of our geologists, who demand years in millions to account for the small portion of the earth's crust they have been able to explore, Egyptian history carries us back to times before Adam. And it shows us an established civilization with the arts flourishing, literature of a kind, animals domesticated, religion developed and provided with a priesthood, and in fact a state of things by no means primitive."

Jones: "Of course, I can imagine some mistakes being made in chronology without that entirely invalidating the Christian theory of the origin of the world."

Smith: "But you need not puzzle over this question of chronology. The creation myth is just a bit of folk-lore, the invention of a Babylonian genius. It has turned up on the clay tablets excavated from the ruined cities in Mesopotamia, and for those who can read the cuneiform writing the originals may be consulted in the British Museum. A similar origin may be assigned to the account of the Deluge and of the Tower of Babel, and all the other legends of the Old Testament. Apart, however, from these facts, I feel sure that if you read the biblical narratives thoughtfully you will recognize their legendary character. But, of course, you must not suppress your better judgment by assuming with the orthodox that all that is written in the Bible is inspired and therefore true. So long as you assume that, any intelligent discussion of the question is impossible."

Jones: "But, my dear friend, I simply cannot at your bidding give up my faith in the Bible, a faith which I was taught by my mother, and which I have never questioned all my life; and especially since it involves my whole religious faith; for it seems to me that if the biblical account of the doing of things in the Garden of Eden is a

myth, then the whole scheme of Christian salvation goes by the board."

Smith: "I agree with you, but I do not propose to continue the argument along that line at present, because I am sure that with more enlightenment in your case, it will be unnecessary. What I would like to ask you, instead, is—How came you to hold views at all on religion, how came you to be a member of a community professing Christianity, and how came you to put such implicit faith in that collection of ancient writings called the Bible?"

Jones: "Why, I was taught it by my mother, I was taught it in the Sunday school, I have lived in an atmosphere all my life which accepted it as true."

Smith: "Exactly. Your religion was impressed upon your young, unquestioning mind by your parents and schoolmasters. You are a Christian because you were born of a Christian family. You believe your Bible because you have been told that it is inspired by God, and contains all necessary guidance for attaining that somewhat vague state of blessedness called salvation."

Jones: "Of course. Why shouldn't I have been taught those things? They are the commonly accepted beliefs of the civilized world."

Smith: "That may be true, but what I want to impress upon you is this—that you have been made a Christian without your consent, just as you would have been made a Buddhist if you had been born in a Buddhist family and community. You couldn't help yourself. The young do not question the statements of those in authority over them. And that same authority taught you to regard your Bible as something too sacred to be subjected to criticism. Thus you have grown up a most admirable specimen of an orthodox believer by the simple and common process of allowing your mind to be moulded by others."

Jones: "Smith, I believe you are right."

Smith: "I know I am right, and while I have not time to discuss this problem further this morning, if you desire to continue at another time I shall be glad to open your eyes to a new realm of thought, in which the mind is emancipated from outside control and permitted to work freely and untrammelled by considerations that hitherto have bound it. In other words, I will introduce you to the domain of freedom and reason. But I must be going now."

II.

The next conversation took place a few days later, when Jones began: "You know, Smith, Mr. Brown, who is an elder in our church, tells me that I ought not discuss these

religious problems with that man Smith, who is an 'atheist.'"

Smith: "That is just what I would expect from Brown. He would not even listen to what I have to say. He simply labels me an atheist and is through with me, having catalogued me as a dangerous element in the community. Perhaps, therefore, I had better give you my views in this respect. In the first place, Brown calls me an atheist because I do not happen to believe in his particular kind of God, and that is what in the popular sense the term means—a man who denies another man's conception of God. But that does not mean the denial of any power whatever outside ourselves. Most of the people who are called atheists are like Socrates who said: "I believe in God, but my belief is beyond the comprehension of my accusers.' And so in the ultimate meaning of the term there really are no atheists in the world. The man who affirms that there is no God may be right, but he cannot prove his case; so it is a much more correct attitude to say 'I do not know,' and to preserve an open mind. Much dirt has been cast at the atheist, and if we are to take him at the valuation of those who besmear him he is a very horrible person. But those who are seeking a reasonable explanation of things, as opposed to the mythical narratives of the Bible, dislike the tarnishing process, because it is unfair and a slander, and so they prefer with the great Huxley to call themselves 'agnostics'! Personally, tho I do not find fault with the word, I had rather be known as a rationalist, because I hold that one should subject all questions of a religious character to the test of reason, as one would any other question. It is the scientific attitude and I have yet to learn of any good reason why we should abandon our commonsense and adopt irrational methods in estimating the claims of religion to be acceptable as truth. So please don't use that word 'atheist' again."

Jones: "But in spite of all you say, and it seems quite sensible, I cannot help feeling that we are morally better for religion, and if you take this religion away, what will you give in its place?"

Smith: "That is the old question which every one asks; and I will answer it by asking another. Does the man, who, suffering from appendicitis, has his appendix removed, implore the surgeon to give him something in place of it? I am under no obligation to put something in its place. If your religion is not true I have done you a service in getting you to abandon it, even though I may not be able to tell you what is true. But in another sense it is impossible to take anything away without putting something in its place. If a man loses his sickness he gains health, if he loses his ignorance he acquires knowl-

edge, if he loses his fears he gains courage, and so if you lose your religion as a reason for being good you will find a much better reason. And, anyway, is a person morally better for religion? The churches have always claimed to dispense morals, but how far has their practise proved this claim? Could the churches suppress crime if the law of the land were suspended? Why, they hardly touch the fringe of that class which provides the bulk of our criminals. Those who attend the church as a rule are very decent people, and nine chances out of ten would be good anyway. And do you know, I believe that the fundamental teaching of the church—the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Jesus—is conducive to wrong doing. If a man believes he can be forgiven for the mere asking, why shouldn't he do anything he pleases?

Jones: "What you have told me certainly convinces me that the orthodox creeds may be called into question, but I simply cannot, at least without much further thought, abandon a belief in God."

Smith: "No one asks you to abandon your belief in God, but let us look for a few moments at the meaning of this word 'God.' By 'God' I take it you mean the Christian triune god, the lineal descendant of Jehovah of the Jews, a person your prayer book describes as having 'no body, parts, or passions.' I won't quarrel with the description, because in some respects it is accurate, inasmuch as some one has wittily remarked it is an excellent description of nothing. However, let us go to the root of things, and see what we can make of the being portrayed in the Old Testament as the figurehead of the universe. He is described as having the figure of a man, for man is made in his likeness. Therefore, he could not be said to have no body. He certainly 'revealed his hinder parts' to Moses, so he must have parts. And upon many occasions he showed anger and jealousy, and therefore could not be said to have no passions. Really this knocks to pieces the church's description, and rather destroys our faith in its ability to describe its own God. In addition, modern research has thrown much light on the evolution of Gods, and has not hestitated to investigate the claims of the Jewish Jehovah. The first important fact that emerges from the inquiry is that the Israelites were polytheists. The Old Testament proves this in countless passages, though the translators have done their best to conceal the fact. For some reason the Jewish priesthood favored him whom they called Jehovah or Yahveh, and installed him as their chief tribal God, vaunting his praises as a god of war. It is pretty generally believed among students that Yahveh was identical with Marduk, the Babylonian Sun-god. And thus almost every God can be traced back to a worship of the sun."

Jones: "You mean to say that all this glorious conception of God finds its origin in sun-worship?"

Smith: "And why not? It was a very natural thing that those early people should have worshipped the sun, not only because it ripened their corn, but because it was the source of all warmth and light and even life itself. Moreover, its intense brilliance and its impressive appearance as the largest of the heavenly bodies, would in themselves have suggested that it was a power to be reckoned with, and therefore to be honored and appeased."

Jones: "But even tho you do thus depose the God of the Jews, you have in no way shown that there is not a god."

Smith: "I agree with you. We are familiar with the attributes of the Jewish God, for it is a very human god-in fact, a glorified man, subject to moods and inconsistencies of action, at times revengeful and cruel, at others beneficent, not altogether dissimilar to the average human being. If we decide that such a person cannot be identified with the presiding genius of the universe, it does not follow that we are debarred from substituting something else. But what? It is easy to postulate a supreme power originating and controlling all things, but how can we picture it? To clothe it in human form, or to ascribe to it human passions, is but to follow the example of primitive men. There is no warrant for investing it with such characteristics. For all we know it may be a gigantic magnet or an ultra-microscopic electron."

Jones: "It seems to me that we simply must postulate something of the kind in order to explain the origin and existence of things."

Smith: "I do not believe so. The fact is that it does not explain anything. It only pushes the explanation back one step farther, for you still have your God to explain. We know that matter and force are indestructible, and since what cannot be destroyed cannot be created, there must always have been as much matter and force in the universe as there is today, and things have assumed the present form of existence as a result of the action and reaction of certain natural forces, the ever developing process of evolution bringing higher and higher forms of life into being."

Jones: "But who created these natural forces?"

Smith: "Why, Nature. But you do not like that answer. Then let me ask who made your creator?"

Jones: "Why, he was never made."

Smith: "Well, I say the same of nature. And let me ask you a question. If you assume the existence of a good

and merciful God, as you believe him to be, how are you going to account for all the suffering in the world, how are you going to justify his ways to men?"

Jones: "We are taught that suffering has a moral value, that men's characters are improved as a result of it."

Smith: "In the first place that is not true. As many characters are ruined as improved by suffering; but even tho it were, that would scarcely justify the eternal period of war and mutual destruction which history records."

Jones: "But man has sinned and all life has been darkened."

Smith: "Can any one accept such an answer today? It is now generally admitted that man developed from lower forms of life. Sinned? Why, the miracle is that he has risen so high. If I owned an estate and allowed rapine and murder to flourish in it, what would be thought of me?"

Jones: "Why, you would be condemned by all just men."

Smith: "Well, the world is God's estate, according to the orthodox view, and history and nature are the record of the rapine and murder that have flourished in it from the beginning, and were never in greater evidence than they are today. And who can discover the hand of divine justice in such tremendous factors of life and death? Why, the mere existence of the influenza germs, which probably killed more people than the great war, is sufficient to upset all the theologies ever invented."

Jones: "How do you explain the universality of the belief in God? Is it not evidence of a human need, like the symptom of hunger?"

Smith: "I might continue your metaphor and say that I may be hungry, but that does not mean that there is anything in the cupboard; but perhaps I could answer your question better this way! At one time there was a universal belief that the world was flat, and that the sun moved over it from east to west once a day. But that popular belief you know was a profound error. Then, remember, too, that the universal belief in God is not so universal as you imagine, because actually each separate religion pictures a different kind of God, with different attributes; and so they are actually different beliefs."

Jones: "But what do you think about the immortality of the soul? Surely you do not doubt that we have a soul and that it continues to exist after death?"

Smith: "I think I see your drift, because if I admit a belief in an immortal soul, at the same time I am admitting an existence of immaterial entities and having gone so far it would hardly be consistent to deny the possibility

of a personal God. I am afraid, therefore, that I must disappoint you. Of course you understand that life is force and must continue to exist in some form; but I can discover no evidence that assures me that what we call the soul has any existence apart from the body, or that man psychically differs in any respect from the higher animals, except in the superior development of his brain and in consequence of his mental faculties. I regard the soul, as a separate entity, as a figment of the imagination, to be classed with man's conception of a personal God. If the soul were an entity capable of existing apart from the body, its assumed power of separate existence would imply that consciousness never could be destroyed. Yet we know to the contrary, for in sleep, and when under the effects of an anesthetic, consciousness ceases, as indeed it seems to after death."

Jones: "Your unusual ideas somewhat bewilder me, and there is nothing I can say until I have had time to think these things over."

Smith: "Quite right. These new aspects of the question are difficult of digestion to those who have not previously faced them, and it is not a simple matter for the mind to cast off its barnacles. My advice is—Go on thinking things over. It is the unthinking crowd which never emerges from the darkness. And read up on the subject. Believe me, many enlightened men have taken the pains carefully to sift all the available evidence for the views of the orthodox, and have printed their conclusions. For instance, on the origins of the idea of God you cannot do better than digest Grant Allen's learned little treatise on 'The Evolution of the Idea of God.' You will find the subject dealt with in a more thoro manner by Frazer in his 'Golden Bough.' You may read with profit Laing's 'Modern Science and Modern Thought' and perhaps the best summary of the whole thing is to be found in Philip Vivian's 'The Churches and Modern Thought.' These books will supply you with much evidence along the line of the views I have just presented, and after you have read them I shall be glad to discuss the matter further with you."

III.

A few days later Jones came to Smith and said "I have read several of the books you mentioned and feel that your arguments in the main are very good, and seem to be backed by plenty of evidence, but I still feel that Christianity has a claim upon us by virtue of its ethical value, its remarkable vitality, and the results it has achieved. Whatever may be the value of the Old Testament as a divine revelation, the New Testament commands our be-

lief by the intrinsic purity of its teaching and the high standard of its ethical purpose."

Smith: "My dear friend, I admit freely that on the whole you correctly describe the character of the New Testament teachings; but I must tell you that their ethical purity is garnered mostly from pagan sources."

Jones: "But the Lord's prayer and the Sermon on the Mount surely are unique?"

Smith: "I am sorry to have to contradict you, but modern scholarship has proved that the Lord's prayer is of pagan origin, and may be found in its entirety almost word for word in a chant addressed to the Babylonian sun-god, Marduk, pre-dating the Christian era by centuries. This ancient hymn was discovered among the debris of the Mesopotamian plains inscribed on a clay tablet that now reposes in the British Museum. And even orthodox writers now admit that most of the sayings of the Sermon on the Mount are found in the Talmud which ante-dates the time of Christ."

Jones: "But think of the results of Christianity. Europe would have remained barbarous and ignorant had it not been for the Church."

Smith: "On the contrary, Europe received her law from Pagan Rome. It was the church which put out the light of knowledge and encouraged a static condition of society. The advent of the new religion was an intellectual catastrophe. Independent thought which has always been the dynamo of progress, was crushed. Everything that the church supported has been discredited; and everything it denounced as wrong has turned out to be right. It became the jailer of human reason. Not only that, but Christianity held back civilization for a thousand years, previous to the Reformation. It inspired more wars than all other causes put together. It persecuted to the death thousands of innocent people. It tortured, it burned living men and women in the flames. It massacred in thousands to serve its own ends of holding power over peoples and rulers. For centuries it has lived on the people, its priesthood subsisting on money and goods exacted as the price of its ministrations. The bitter and determined enemy of progress has been the Christian church. About this there can be no question. The facts look out of myriad pages of history, and make up many of its blackest infamies. They have been recorded by Buckle, and Draper and Leckey and White. And all these things, my friend, must be taken into account in estimating the value of Christianity to that part of the human race that has come under its influence."

Jones: "But you surely do not deny the reality of Christian experience! The thought of Christianity has changed men's lives; has even changed their faces."

Smith: "No, I do not for a moment deny the inner reality of Christian experience; but you must also admit the reality of the religious experience of the Buddhist, the Brahman, the Mohammedan, and for that matter the intense reality of the religious experience of the South Sea Islanders. All of these people are as convinced of the truth of their own creeds as they are of the falseness of yours."

Jones: "But, tell me, Smith, don't you believe that any good is to be derived from praying? I happen to know of many instances in my own family circle in which prayer undoubtedly has been answered."

Smith: "So you think prayer has been answered, and it follows then that there exists a person or power that can hear our prayers, and at his discretion grant what we ask! In other words, you conceive that the whole chain of cause and effect can be deranged for the purpose of gratifying the wishes of an individual, and simply because he has asked for this miracle to be performed. Well, I do not for a moment doubt that in these instances circumstances pointed to the benefits as the direct result of prayer; but think for a moment what millions of prayers daily are being sent broadcast to their heavenly destination like wireless waves, and how impossible it would be that some few of the things prayed for should not be attained. Before, however, you can be sure that a particular request has been granted by the deity, you must be careful to eliminate all other possible explanations, and that is not always easy. For instance, I can remember in my young days of listening to the preaching of a converted burglar. He was discussing 'the power of prayer' and as an illustration he told of his need of an overcoat, and how he fervently prayed for one. In a few days a parcel was delivered to him containing the desired garment with an anonymous note saying 'The Lord hath sent you this.' It was not stated, however, that the postmark indicated a heavenly place; and one may safely surmise that some wellwisher, having heard that his prayers had gone heavenward for a new coat, provided him with one. The fact is that prayer, as commonly understood, has two aspects. It consists first in flattery of the divine person, and second in requests for personal benefits. To suppose that the great power that animates the universe would be amenable to flattery is to invest it with a very human failing. To the primitive man his god was a dispenser of ill fortune unless he was appeased, and it was thought that god, like man, could be appeased by means of flattery. And the habit of praying

for things we find difficult of attainment is demoralizing, because it is an endeavor to substitute an easily made request for a less easily made effort. It is apt to sap man's initiative and curb his industry. What we need above all else is to convince men that results are obtained by effort and not by prayer."

Jones: "My minister says—"

Smith: "Ah, at last the thing is out. I felt sure that you were being prompted by some parson friend."

Jones: "Well, why not?"

Smith: "It is all right, the parsons are not a bad lot in many respects; and yet I would like to see the whole priesthood dissolved. Without denying that they render certain services to the community, the sum total of such does not justify the cost, from a purely business point of view. Think of what man-power is lost to the community by the church absorbing a proportion of its potential workers into the priesthood. And think of the money devoted to the maintenance of the church and its associated organizations, such as missionary societies, and how much better it might be applied to more useful purposes. You talk about the high cost of living, it is nothing as compared with the high cost of superstition. Besides I consider that they do harm in disseminating what I can regard only as superstition. Here in this little village it is painful to me to see how the poor and ignorant are brought under church discipline, and especially how their children are steeped in fear and their minds filled with false views of life. Verily it is a case of the blind leading the blind."

Jones: "Oh, I think the church serves a useful purpose at least in preserving our ethical ideals."

Smith: "I doubt it. Whatever the efforts made by the church to disseminate moral teaching it does in a very inefficient manner, and so mixes up its teaching with theological entanglements as to confuse the issues. If we are to advance in the moral scale, it must be by means of machinery more efficient than the churches provide. We must diffuse knowledge. Our educational system must be revised. Children must not be permitted to waste time in learning to sing hymns which are dogma in doggerel form, and in reading the Bible, which is as little understood by the young minds, as an essay in Sanskrit. The principles of morality must be divorced entirely from religious dogma. The mind of the child must be trained to realize the actual advantages that accrue from good conduct, and to recognize his duty to his fellows. It is now taught that moral excellence must be acquired because it pleases God, removes the danger of eternal pun-

ishment, and ensures life everlasting in a heaven. I would teach the child that the greatest crime is treachery to his fellow creatures, that he who does ill to any man is injuring himself, that lapses from good conduct usually produce their own punishment, that happiness is attainable only if he preserves his self-respect and treats his fellow creatures as he would be treated."

IV.

This ended the conversation for that day, and several weeks passed before these men met again. In fact, Smith began to think that after all his trouble, Jones had slid back to his original position, when he came to him with outstretched hand to say that he had been thinking over these things about which they had been talking, that he had been reading the books suggested by his friend, and that he was practically convinced of the truth of Smith's position. Smith then congratulated him upon turning from the error of his ways, and Jones said: "And I want to tell you that since I have come to this position and have cast off every vestige of superstition, I am a changed man. I realize now that I had been playing for safety."

Smith: "Safety from what?"

Jones: "From an imaginary uncomfortable time in a tropical region that has never been located, and whose presiding genius is so mythical that very few even of the orthodox believe in his existence. And since I have abandoned my interest in a life beyond the grave, I am finding compensation in a keener interest in life on this planet."

Smith: "And having banished the bogey erected by the church and forced upon you by your early teachers, do you feel free to turn yourself into a libertine and to indulge in an orgy of sin just because you have rejected the idea of eternal punishment."

Jones: "On the contrary I am disposed to be a little more careful to act fairly and justly by my fellowmen. I am convinced that I have advanced morally, and my self-respect has grown greatly as a result of my change of outlook."

Smith: "What then becomes of the assurances put out by those interested in maintaining the prestige of the church to the effect that universal disbelief in its creeds would mean reversion to barbarism, at least insofar as concerns those forms of immorality that do not come within the cognizance of the law of the land?"

Jones: "The whole thing is a fallacy. I am now convinced that this humanistic attitude toward life leaves one

under a deeper obligation to do right than the Christian religion."

Smith: "I certainly am glad to hear you say that, for now I can leave you to your own thinking; for the man who has adopted the rationalistic method as his rule of life never looks back, but steers gaily ahead, his mind freed from its fetters and his outlook straight forward along that direct path that leads to human happiness and the satisfaction which comes from a sense of duty faithfully done to those who travel the same road."

Jones: "I believe that and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the interest you have taken in me, and the new light you have brought to me."

Smith: "Don't thank me. I have really enjoyed these conversations; and as the missionary spirit has now been aroused in me, I shall be on the lookout for another erring soul to save from the clutches of present day superstition."